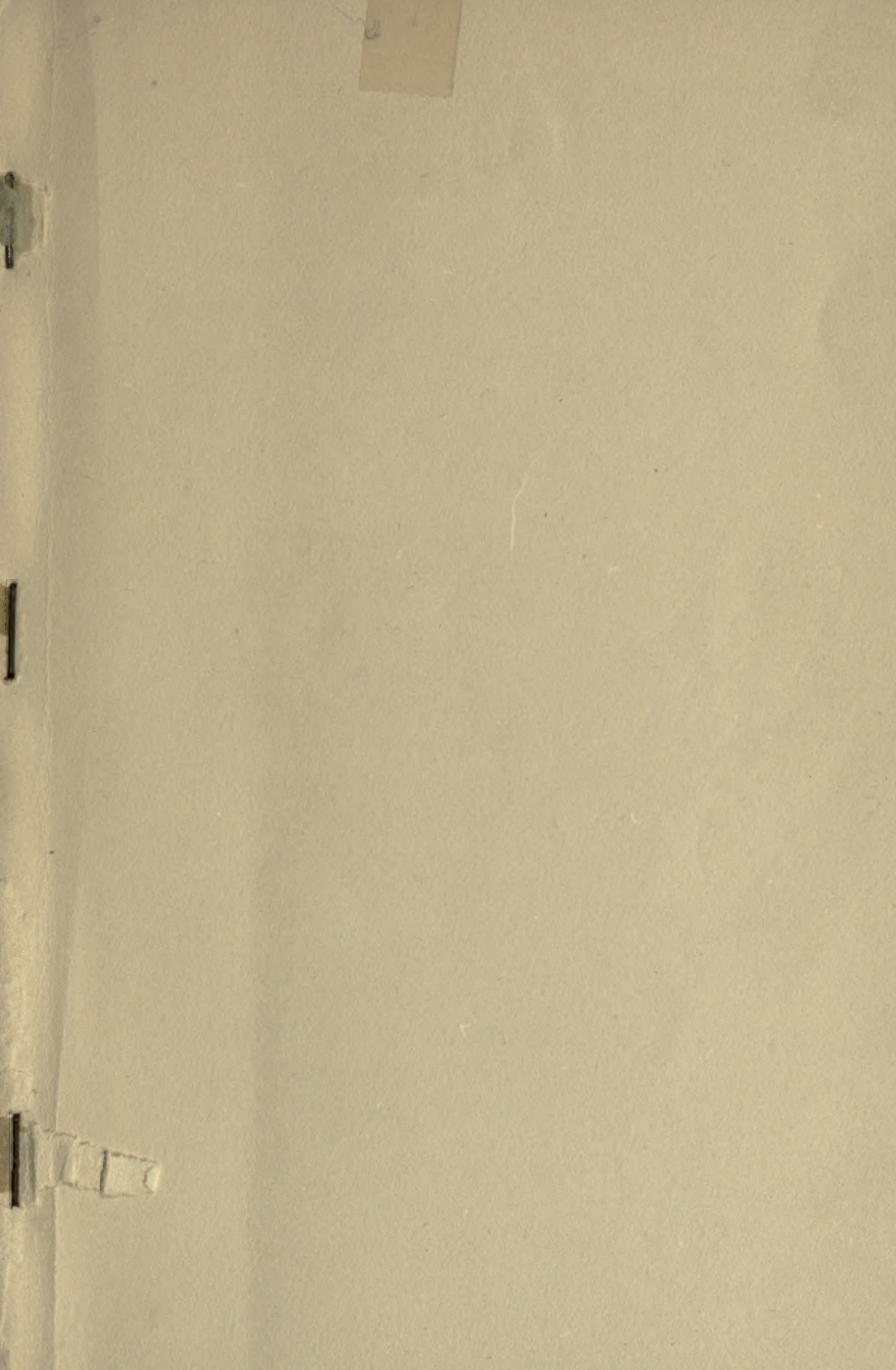



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POEMS

And

Poems of California and the West

By

BEN FIELD

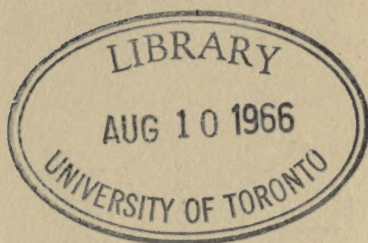


BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
The Gorham Press
1904

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Printed at
THE GORHAM PRESS
Boston, U. S. A.

Dedicated to
Annie Elizabeth Cheney

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THE SIGN OF THE ULTIMATE

I stood on an island sea beach,
No other soul was there
Save the soul of the island, sleeping,
And the soul of God in the air.

The beach was long and lonely
And my soul was lonely too:
No being gave me greeting,
But above the sea-birds flew.

Full well I knew the sea of Life,
Full long I'd searched its deeps,
But now, behold, oncoming,
A wave that landward sweeps.

I saw with eyes far seeing,
And knew with thought profound:
I heard the rush of Being
In that tumultuous sound.

Power spoke with accent certain,
Force lived in that wild roar,
An aeon raised its curtain—
A billow crashed ashore.

THE SOUL'S DEFIANCE

Take if Thou wilt my every hope away!
Crush down the longings of my youth,
Make dark the glorious spring-like day,
Forbid the mind that seeketh Truth.

Strong One, whoever Thou mayst be!
On me cast Thou the evil of Thine eye,

Take strength and love and power to see,
Thy direst deeds still I defy.

While life doth last, and heart doth beat however
faint,
I'll lift my soul to realms of beauty fair
And, though Thy breath doth scorch and taint,
I'll laugh and love and revel there.

POETRY

Thou art the deep and mystic sea
That laps against the hurrying feet
Of men and calms their idle fears,
And every being bends the knee
Upon thy strand, for life is sweet
Where blows the wind from unknown spheres.

No more can man in Science trust
Than in the work that thou hast done,
Nor yet so much, for thou art Life.
Thou art the glitter, through the rust,
That shines as through the clouds the sun—
Thou art the motive of the strife.

The poet is the man that sings,
That plays upon the harp's wild strings,
That reads the tale of starry skies,
That soars aloft on seraph's wings,
That, from the stone, the statue brings,
That sees the depths in woman's eyes.

The poet is the man whose brush
Can paint with words, that flush
To cheek doth bring,

Whose canvas is the human heart—
He makes the whole world sing.

Poetry is Life's wild song,
The voice of right, the cry of wrong,
The sign of fairer days.

THE ROCKS OF RAMIREZ

Long years ago, with childish eyes,
I gazed upon a mountain, grand,
That reached its hoary height
Up, up into the azure skies.
I wondered then, in childish spell,
How many years were passed and gone
Since first that mountain rose,
Or first the waters from it fell
And left it there, in grim repose.

In later days, a boy, I roved the seas
And once away to southward sailed
And, rounding wild Cape Horn,
I saw the rocks of Ramirez
That jut, an island, through the blue
And billowy waves,
Defying all the ships that sail,—
Diego Ramirez, but you,
And sky and water and the south wind's wail!

Note.—The author, when a boy, sailed around Cape Horn on an English merchantman bound from San Pedro, California, to Queenstown, and he uses the word Ramirez as the sailors pronounced it,—accent on the last syllable (ruz).

Against thy rocky crags the billows dashed,
The white spray stung thy cliffs,
The sea birds circled round thy shores,
With sullen roars the ocean crashed.
I see it still, the salt sea foam,
Climb up thy sides to fall!
We passed the rocks of Ramirez
And set our sails for home,
But memory yet is on the seas.

THE DRAGON

Gods and Devils all my heroes,
Hell and Heaven each my tryst,
With my claws upon the pulsing,
Great and brawny wrist
Of Earth,
O Mirth!
To know her fears,
To see her tears,
To feel her quaking,
To force her waking;
When Ignorance, my son,
Stalks through the land
And Fear, my fair one,
Holds by either hand!

I am the Dragon who sits on high,
Behind a thunder cloud.
I send far off and beckon nigh
And wrap the world in gloomy shroud.

I clutch with vicious claws—O glee!
I am the Dragon of earth and sea!
When cities burn and ships go down,
Ho! there am I in hellish gown.
I put a finger to my mouth
And whistle, when the earth has drouth.
If men will fight,
For wrong or right,
It matters not which it may be,
I clap them on to kill or flee.
I send the missionaries out
The foreign wars to bring about:
Hell is my seething caldron-pot
And misery my garden plot.

I am the Dragon!
Ho! ho, old world!
Wag on, content am I.

LIBERTY

Fair Liberty thou art a goddess bright!
And strange are the deeds that we do for thee
And the ways of the world that make men free
Are as fair as the day and black as night.
In the name of a God fanatics fight—
As the spirits of darkness cowards flee,
Till War has wrecked like a storm on the sea
And the wrong has given place to the right;
But Liberty fair thou soarest on high—
Yet higher still as the centuries roll
And the voice of tyrants is fain to cry
That the Truth is emblazoned on thy scroll.
While the angel of wisdom draweth nigh
Come the nations of earth to Freedom's goal.

O SPEAK TO ME.

I love the hills my Saviour trod,
The vales where he communed with God,
Here Glamour all her flowers has strown,
I love this land—his very own.

As Thou didst speak at Pentecost,
O Jesus speak to me, or chide,
But speak while walking at my side;
Speak, speak to me!

As Thou didst speak at Galilee,
To men of old, speak now to me;
As spake Thy passion at Gethsemane,
Speak Thou to me!

It cannot be that Thou art lost,
Thy Father's house is not so far,
Thy promises still with me are
And Time, was only younger, when,
My Saviour, Thou wert here with men,
And Space, 'tis just as wide as then;
Thou mayest surely come again,
Speak, speak to me!

O Love of mine transmute,
This love I bear for earth,
And give it heavenly birth!
Hang Thou about it now,
A halo from Thy brow,
O speak to me!

Make sacred my desire!
And set my soul afire,
With love of Thee.

Bend down Thy Kingly head
That impress of the thorns I see,
And speak to me!
Reach out Thy hands that bleed,
For Thee I sorely need,
O speak to me!

Jesus, my Saviour, mine!
Speak Thou to-night,
Illumine with Thy light,
My Hope! my Love! my God!
Hear Thou my vow,
O let me now
Thy vision see,
Speak—speak to me!

MUSIC

Music! Unveiled hast thou another sphere;
And over seas of azure clear,
On wings now slow, now fleet,
Thou comest. Ah! my heart doth beat
To rhythmic sounds unknown before,
My feet press hard upon the shore
Of wide and silvery sea,
Across whose waves thou callest me.
Thy murmur sweet falls on mine ear,
And then with notes that ever rise,
Thy thundering tones assail the skies.
And, sinking once again all low,
Thy martial strain grows soft and slow.
I feel its meaning, almost seize,
And then implore on bended knees
That thou wilt make thy raptures clear,
That thou wilt bring thy sirens near.

But as I grasp at joys unknown,
New beauties flash—the others flown.
Faster they come! I hold my breath,
Lest silvery sounds, so sweet, mean death.

This, Music, is thy shining sea,
Whose gentle waves roll in to me
With sounds too sweet for mortal ear,
With notes too dear for man to hear.
Upon this shore of thine I stand
And, longing, look for unseen strand
Whose verge is fair and far away,
Unfathomed save by passion's ray.

Away! I'll leave the world behind
And launch my bark, that shore to find!

WE SUFFER NOT ALONE

Dislodged by graceful deer,
A sharp and flinty rock
Leapt down the mountain side,
And by its own wild force fell clear
To smiling valley, with a shock
So great that rugged bark
Of oak was clave apart,
And there it sunk
Into a giant trunk,
While startled bird and beast
Resumed their wonted loves,
And hum of bees was heard,
And coo of doves.
But time passed on—
Weary and sore,
With cruel love harrassed,
I sought sweet nature's solitude

In smiling valley, o'er
Which hung wild height, sublime
With jagged crags.
A gnarled oak with twisted arms
And half dead leaves, stood
In my path and in its trunk
I saw a sunken rock.
O'er and about the flinty stone
The living fiber grew,
While still that oaken heart
Was pierced. Alone
The grand old monarch stood
Amongst its fellows, firm,
Who never knew its bitter grief,
As time dragged on.

THE SLAVE

Daughter of brawn, with weary face,
Rough cap in the arching stone,
The home she holds in its proper place,
Sad slave of sinew and bone.

Never did nerves know how to strain
Till toil to babes gave birth,
Till rounded breasts were racked with pain
And youth was bent to earth.

Daughter of brawn, with callous hands,
She knows no happy hour,
The weary years, with running sands,
Drag out her bridal dower.

Grind on, O slave of the sunken!
While the rich are hot with wine:
The sons of men are drunken—
God's justice is divine.

MY MUSE

My Muse, O rest awhile!
My head and heart beguile.
Stop here thy pace,
Show me thy face,
For soul of mine is sad
And love of mine is sore.
Make me with passion glad
And thrill me more and more!
My Muse, give me thine arms
And, on thy heaving breast,
Let head of mine find rest.
Close to thy bosom warm,
Let heart of mine alarm
My other self,
With beating!
With throbbing!
With such a passion's swirl,
That brain, in giddy whirl
Shall drunken be,
And I, forget!

Ha, ha! rouse up, O sluggish soul!
Thinkst thou a Muse may tarry,
Thine arms to feel, thy kisses hot
To pay, thy passion long to parry?
I wave my hand to thee! come on!
Forget not fame all fair!
Rouse up and strive beloved one,
Rouse up to do and dare!

Ho! great am I!
Fame from on high
Descends to wait on me.

All people sing my praise,
A pean, through the days.
I grasp the hidden key,
Of Life's one mystery!
I touch the chords divine!
The music! it is mine!
What, kneeling one!
Who, who art thou?
My Muse? Ah yes,
Why camest here?
My race is run
And on my brow,
All fair to see,
Are fame's immortal flowers!
These, these I give to thee!
Alas, they fall!
They crumble!
Muse, return
And light the fire,
In blackened urn.
O Muse, fair Muse!
My gems are pebbles all,
My sweets are gall.
Do not refuse,
Come back to me!
Thine arms are dearer far
Than garlands fair of fame,
That burned with bursting flame.

O let me lie with thee
And clasp thee in my arms.
O give my passion free
Delight to have its full!
Thou art my queen,
Far more to me than fame!
My eyes have seen

The depths of smold'ring flame
In thine.

Forgive me, Muse!
Thine arms,
Thy breasts,
I will not lose.
Thy limbs all bare,
Thy perfumed hair,
Are more to me
Than God,
Or hope of Heaven!
As bee the honey sips,
Kiss, kiss my longing lips.
I know not dread nor fright,
Hold, hold me tight!
I die! but Muse,
In thy embrace,
'Tis sweet with thee to face
The mask of death!
Breathe out thy breath again,
Close, close to me, and then
Thyself in passion's ecstasy
Refuse me not,
O Muse, my Muse.

OCEAN

Ocean, pray, how deep are you?
Ocean wide, how old?
Could I but wander, wander through
Your blue depths, silent—cold!

Old Ocean, your sheer, satin gown,
Is good and fair to see:

Those that with battered wrecks go down,
In it shall folded be.

Then give me, Ocean, restless strength
To travel o'er you far,
To know your reach and sinuous length,
Till towering mountains bar.

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

Mute and unshaped, in marble hills,
Are untouched Mercurys lying,
Fairer of form, with power more rife
Than gladiators dying.

Has sculptor cut a Venus face,
Or shaped a warrior's bust?
The dream undreamed is fairer yet
Than these, that turn to dust.

The touch, that makes a canvas live,
Was taught by hands unseen,
Yet fairer gifts are there to give
And fairer flowers to glean.

Back of the hand, that holds the brush,
Is the dream of a godlike mind,
But the graceful flight of the soul of Art,
Is swift as the stormy wind.

The song of the singer is not so sweet
As the song that was never sung,
So the words we hold, with the heart's quick
beat,
To the winds are never flung.

The story of Love is told to men
In rhythmic words aflame,
A deeper tale is left untold,
Too fair for man to name.

Back of the dream of the painter,
Back of the sculptor's ideal,
Far, where the song sounds fainter,
Where the soul is strong and leal,
Up, where the air is ether,
Keen as the edge of a knife,
Down, in the depths of Nature,
Flows ever the Rhythm of Life.

THE PRAYER OF GLOOM

Aimlessly wandering at dawn of day,
Unknowing I went from the beaten way,
Where men go to and fro,
Till halting at last at a lonely spot,
Away from my God and by men forgot,
My head I bended low.

I was young, but the years oppressed,
I was weary, my woe confessed;
Nature was blank, and Love was a lie,
I sank on the earth and the welcome tears
Refused to come, nor devilish fears
To rouse me more as the time went by.

How long I may not tell
Mine eyes stared into Hell
When onward came a cloud
My ghastly gaze to shade,
Came dark and dripping to my aid
And threatened me, as if a shroud.

I prayed this hovering Gloom to lower
And cover me with grave clothes o'er;
Mine arms stretched I aloft,
As came the stormy wraith
Drawn by my mighty faith,
And spilled its rain-drops soft.

Then raged the gale,
On frail earth,—frail;
In awe I held my breath,
Bent were the trees,
Blown to their knees
They menaced me with death.

BEAUTIFUL HILLS

Bathed in the blue of creation,
Hushed by the hand that is strong,
Prone on the breast of the mother,
Aglow with her light and her song—

Thy beauty is soft like the ocean,
Thy charm is sucked from the earth,
When islands were rocked and cradled
The mother gave thee in birth.

Babe of quiet contentment,
Child of the peace that fills,
Offspring born of loving—
Beautiful, mystic hills.

AMERICA AND IMMORTALITY

America!

How many years hast lived?

A century's span and more!

Ha, ha!

A swallow builds its home within a cave

And, pecking in the sturdy tree,

A bird doth make its nest—

And both may last as long.

What hast thou done

To stamp upon the face of time

An impress of thy being?

Liberty! Washington!

Ho, ho!

Rome had her generals

And aspirations too

And where are they?

The faith of Christ

Within thy borders nourished!

There are a thousand others—

Thy sons have died—

Their deeds once done

Are passed and silent—

E'en printed books must mould and rot;

But thou, America!

What hast thou done

That thou canst think to last?

That men through thee

Have learned to live as men

And not as beasts?

What matters how men live

Since, dying, they are through?

Immortal, sayest thou?

We ask for proof!
What man that died
E'er came again to tell us
Of his going?
What soul once sunk
In death's oblivion
E'er sent a message back?
Be still ye little ones
Who tell us fairy tales
That we have heard before!
We ask for proof—
One jot or tittle that is true!
Egypt built her pyramids—
We know she did!
A people put them there—
And ancient kings
Reared temples
That a million suns
Have shone upon—
But thou, America!
Where is thy monument
Dedicated to the onward roll
And strewn about with bones?

Go then and on thy desert plains
Erect a mound!
Let thousands die
If need be—that it may grow!
And in its center
Construct a room
Built firm with parian slabs
And blocks of flint
And on an ivory throne
With crystal pillars guarded
Place there a golden scroll
Held open by a hand—

And in this scroll
Set diamonds
That shall spell
In Saxon words—
America did this thing—
And when 'tis done
No surer proof there'll be
Of dreamy Immortality.

THE ATHEISM OF THE MAN.

Ye paltry being that dost boast
The knowledge of a god—
The wisdom of the ages—
Do thou one starlit night
But raise from lowly sod
Thine eyes and gaze where stars,
Innumerable and bright,
Shine on the puny deeds of men.
O be thou of earth's sages!
It matters not.
Thy deeds, thy asperations,
Thy wild ambition, and delight
In what it seems thou hast achieved
Are but a grain of sand
Blown on the wide Saharah.
O self-wise scholar!
In whose hand the key
Of learning dost but lightly rest,
Seal up thy foolish lips
And bind the wordy sheaf.
Thou hast, in wanton heart,
Made bold to say
"There is no God!"
Look on the budding rose!

Behold the blade of grass!
See thou the coming day,
Bright shod
With glory! and the night
Like gentle mass
For souls that pass away!
Lift up thine eyes with humble faith
And know
That thou art let to be
Is proof of immortality!

SAPPHO, ALONE.

Sappho! sleeping still alone!
The moon and Pleiades have set,
Full half the lovely night has flown
And thou! and thou all passionate!

The time is passing, fair one, now
Upon thy sweetly swelling breast
And on thy Grecian Goddess brow,
Should Phaon's head and kisses rest.

Sappho! sleeping still alone?
O wanton sweet, unknown to shame!
From Rapture's arms thy lover flown,
Shall live his flight to sorely blame.

ARRAIGNMENT AND ANSWER.

Why give me a soul to suffer,
Why a heart but to hurt?
Is the glitter of life worth grasping,
The gold to dig from the dirt?

God! why do I love so keenly?
Did you place me here for a jest?
Can I never break down the barriers
'Twixt me and all that is best?

Did I ask to be born to loving,
To loving forever alone?
Then pardon my foolish rashness
And change me into a stone!

O God forgive my rebellion
Or yet it is quite too late!
And God to my soul said softly—
"Comes all to him that can wait."

THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

O, the sweet scent of grasses,
The odor of violets
And new-mown hay,
When love, unfathomed, passes
In garments airy,
An unseen fairy,
Close to your wandering way.

O, the choruses of morning,
The last damp mists of night,
The hour of mystic seeing
When day is just adorning,
With rosy beams of light,
Her awakened charms of night
That stir her lover's being.

O, the foaming breast of billows,
O, the southing of the pine

And the lonely desert's breath
And the arm from out the willows.
O, the mystery of life
And the endlessness of strife
And the going down to death.

GOOD-BY

Good-by! we lightly say it o'er,
And when the friend has gone
And we have shut the narrow door,
Joy too is then withdrawn.

Alas! and did we know
The turning of a street
Would bring us endless woe,
That ne'er again his feet
Would tread within our hall,
Think you Convention's claim
Would put on Love a pall
And let him go,—the same?

Good-by! O, why did love of mine
Not brush aside its fear,
And arms of mine entwine—entwine
His neck, in rapture dear?

Good-by! he thinks I love him not;
He's far away, amongst the years,
While life to me is ever fraught
With pain and bitter tears.

O SAY, LITTLE BOY!

I'll sail away to lullaby land
Where my little boy goes when asleep,
Where the cockle shells roll on the yellow sand
And the water is only knee deep.

And along the shore of that shining strand
We'll meet 'neath starry domes
And you and I with hand in hand
Shall visit the little homes
Of the pretty people of poppy land,
Who receive on drowsy day,
And the little brown maids with a brownie band
Shall sing in a wonderful way
And the trooping fairies from the hills will come
As the mermaids comb their hair.
While you and I with the elfins roam
Each star has a golden stair
Stretching away o'er the waters deep
And rising into the night
Where the angels play, and will not sleep,
Bo-peep till morning light.

O say, little boy, will you meet me there
Beneath the gloaming skies
And with me climb the starry stair
Up, up to Paradise?

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

"Give us this day our daily bread"
Lisp babes in a lullaby
And the little ones whose prayers are said
Asleep on their pillows lie.

'Tis well—but the years that come
Dispel the lessons taught
And tender hearts grow cold and numb
While bread is sold and bought.

“Give me to eat!” the beggar cries
“I’m hungry and I die!”
And Christ looks out from Paradise
And sees the rich go by.

A SINGER OF SONGS

She stands before her shrine,
All lovely and all fair
And laurel leaves entwine
Her golden crown of hair.

She stands at music’s fount,
Apollo’s devotee,
The fabled swan to mount,
She stoops with bended knee.

Yet, till with Paeon far she flies,
I watch and never tire
Of glorious songs and glorious eyes
Aglow with deathless fire.

But sweet and fairest friend,
With song, before thy shrine,
Love’s worship is my end;
Your harp this heart of mine.

UNDINE

A youth upon a lonely sea beach lay
And dreamed and woke and dreamed again of
Love;

Awake at last,—it was the close of day
And one was watching him from rocks above.

She was a nymph, of beauty wild and fair,
And eyes of brown spoke longing none may tell;
Old ocean's water dripped from golden hair,
And sea weed from her graceful shoulders fell.

Naked, Undine held the sea weed to her breast
And wound it with her hair about her arms,
And there, upon the golden sands—her love confessed—

She won the dreaming youth with rosy charms.

The last red gleams of sun flashed fiery, rare,
The youth vowed love and worship of a slave,
Then Undine led the way, with flowing hair,
To bridal bed in rocky cave.

Nor would she go with him until that time,
When earth and air and sea were mild,
When every heart beat soft with song and rhyme
She held within her arms a little child.

Then Undine's bosom thrilled with heaven's joy,
Her virgin dreams had borne her to the goal,
For as she pressed to rounded breast her boy,
She knew that Love had given her a Soul.

BEAUTY AND LOVE

Straight is the line of beauty,
Nor curved as often said:
Look far away o'er ocean,
Across the briny bed.

Straight is the long horizon,
Straight as the line of duty;
Though heaven is arched above us
Straight is the line of beauty.

Old ocean's bed is bended,
Old ocean's surface too,
But beauty is not ended
When curved away from you.

Straight is the line of beauty!
When love has made retreat
The heart has one sweet duty,
Straight to the maiden's feet.

HE PLAYS ON HEART OF HERS

He plays on heart of hers,
As fingering o'er the keys,
Music obeys his touch.
In her sad face one sees
The soul in passionate clutch
Of love.

He plays on heart of hers,
But his wild love has flown
To other skies;
For other eyes

He longs,
And songs
Of his are sung full fair,
For one that is not with him there.

O pity! that these loves, like souls,
Must stray and miss their goals,
These loves that banish hovering night
And bring to us untold delight.
Yet whensoever a heart doth love,
Somewhere, however late,
In garden or in greenwood grove,
The mourning dove
Will find its mate.

LONGINGS SHE LEFT BEHIND

Sweetheart, you have gone to make a name,
Fame's castle you have almost built,
But know, sweetheart, time runs the same
And castles are covered with gilt.
Do you think your castle so fair may rise
That Time, on bended knee,
Shall show to all mens' wondering eyes
Your name, my Gertie Lee?

Do you think the lamps that cheer the night,
Close down to the door of death,
Are filled with sparks of fame all bright
Or are they filled with breath?
Breath and soul and baby life,
Small hands that clasp the knee,
Fairest flowers of fame or wife
O gentle Gertie Lee!

Sweetheart, I long for your love alway—
To share in your love and life—
I long for your arms, your eyes each day,
Sweetheart—my darling—my wife!
But if Castle of Fame shines all too fair
And it may never be
You will find me waiting for you, close there
By the gates, O Gertie Lee.

A BUNCH OF ROSES

Thy birthday, sweetheart,
Is my birthday too
For love makes my heart beat
When thoughts are of you
And the love that I offer
The queen of my soul
Was born on thy birthday,
Has thee for its goal.
I wish thee, my sweetheart,
A happy birthday
And I send thee this token
In sweet old-time way.

ROME, AMERICA—THE DIFFERENCE

A Tribute to President McKinley, May, 1901.

The Caesar, drunk with wine
And satiate with pleasure,
Had thought of going forth
Throughout his kingly realm,
But feared the populace.
Then called he unto him his lords
And bade his generals pay attention—
"Arrest whom ye may at night

Within the streets of Rome
And hang them on the morrow
As a warning to the people,
For I, the Emperor, will go abroad.
Let the Pretorian Guards be doubled
To wait upon my presence
Both night and day.
Send noble couriers forth
To distant portions of the Empire,
With sword and honeyed words,
To raise a tribute for our pleasure,
Then gather all that's good and fair
From out our vast domain
And give it place within my train—
My jewels and my statuary,
My works of art and birds and beasts,
And those that sing and play and dance,
Provided that they shall not vie with Nero.
And look you (privately)—
Send our commands to Antium,
To Naples and through Greece,
That wheresoever Nero plays upon the lute
And sings his own immortal songs
Men shall be hired or forced to give applause.
And list you now—
Bring from her vestal shrine
The fairest virgin that doth serve the God,
To wait upon my chamber
And ease my troubled sleep.”
Thus spake the Emperor Nero
And they that heard cried out in fear:—
“Caesar can do no wrong—
Long live divinest Caesar!”

And in those days Rome burned
At his command;
And Caesar looked—and played upon his lute.

The President, at his desk,
Gave heart and brain
To the welfare of his country.
Great deeds of state were his
And words that swayed the nations.
Men's lives to him were sacred,
And property was second unto life.
Out from the farthest reaches of America
There came the call of loyal sons
To see their Chiefest Chief,
And he was prayed to go abroad.
New England sent him her petition,
And far to the South the loyal land
Made ready for his welcome.
California flashed down the golden beams
Of the star of empire
That hangs above her fairness,
A message to him full of love,
And from the islands of the sea
There came the call of new-born citizens.
'Twas said of ancient time
"To be a Roman was greater than to be a King,"
But we that live to-day
Rest long our eyes upon the land
Where Freedom dwells,
And whisper—
"God bless our noble President!"

GARDENS OF SILENCE

Shaded with cypress, where the virgins lie
Strewn with flowers all the dead,
Weeping and sighing as the years go by,
The clouds and trees overhead.

Fair Gardens of Silence throughout the land—
Cities of dead that are dear,
Marble and granite near at hand,
Lilies to cover up fear.

Close to the school and church and home
Not far from the pulse of trade
Are the silent gardens where mourners roam
In the gloomy cypress shade.

Wheresoever villages dot the earth
Or smoke curls into the air
Or little children laugh with mirth,
The Gardens of Silence are there.

LIGHTS OF THE CITY

O, the lights of the throbbing city
That gleam o'er her pulsing ways!
Like the stars in the distant heavens
That glitter between the days.

Do you know of the terrible distance
Between your childrens' hearts?
Do you dream of the bitter struggle,
Each night in the city's marts?

The stars in the arching heavens
Can tell of nature's strife—
They see the awful discords
And behold the heavenly life;

But you, O lights of the city,
Is your gleam never shadowed by sin?
Is your glow but a semblance of pity
To be hid in the crush and the din?

Do you know the hunger and sorrow
That pierce and stab like a knife?
You brighten but ever the morrow
Brings ebbing to many a life.

O lights of the groaning city!
You see Life's tragic side, —
You shine on the gay and the witty
And the hell that never will hide.

O the glow that you throw about passion!
O the gleam that you shed on the fair!
O the glare that you lend to gay fashion
And the guilt that you find ever there!

Shine on, O lights of the city!
You respect not actions of men,
For to you a drunken ditty
Comes close on a solemn amen.

You know not the barter of virtue,
You heed not the passion or prayer,
Your rays shine brightly and ever
On the guilty, the gay and the fair.

But to-night as I look o'er the city,
On her lights as thick as the stars,
I wonder if eyes are about us
As glowing and mystic as Mars,—

I wonder if spirit lights glitter
With feelings divergent as men,
I wonder if Easy and Bitter
Are weighed in the balance and when.

MY LOVE, THE WIND

Blow, wild wind, over desert waste,
Blow here upon my heart!
I raise my arms with passion's haste
And love thee as thou art.

Wind of the desert, wind of the sea,
Whose fury stilleth men,
Thou blowest hell fires out for me
To make me strong again.

O wind of heaven, wind of earth,
Thou bold, brave mystery!
Thou lovest man from death to birth
Throughout life's history.

Then here's to thee beloved wind,
My friend, my soul, my brother!
If nothing else in life I find,
We'll love for aye each other.

ONE FROM MILLIONS

It matters not what things you do,
It matters not what leave undone,
The world has little need of you
To carry out the work begun.

Think not your place none else may fill,
Think not your deeds are of account,
Do naught at all or do but ill,
Your life to nothing shall amount.

Like ants you swarm o'er little place,
Like sands your bones lie everywhere;
And whether slow or swift the race,
The Gods shall neither know nor care.

But sometimes in the swing through space,
An arm is raised in might,
A giant soul illumines a face
And dawn dispels the night.

A Christ walks through the groaning land,
A Shakespeare writes unseen,
Napoleon gives a stern command,—
But ages run between.

Then would you live, and not exist,
Strike! strike! immortal, rouse!
Peer out from pall of blinding mist,—
A coward he, that bows!

THE GARDEN OF THE WORLD

The garden of the world is fair
And, sheltered by some mossy wall,
Where never blows the winter storms,
I rest and watch the graceful forms
Of maidens, wandering where the wild birds call.

These seem to be the fairest forms create.
Their arms are bare and laughing eyes
Look into mine, and cheeks aglow
With throbbing blood, all let me know
That I have found earth's paradise.

Why should I further search
Throughout the garden of the earth?

Why wander on where death and pain
Silence with grief the joyous strain
And cover up the confined mirth?

A stranger, I am satisfied
With songs of birds and gardens green,
With arching blue of summer skies,
And smiling blue of woman's eyes,
Which hint of happiness unseen.

A FRAGMENT

Ah Gods! I wake with sighs,—
Like Sappho's cries when Phaon flies.
Her snowy arms and beating heart are dreams,
And yet,—in ages gone, the gleams
From her dark eyes I knew, it seems.

MY ONE SWEET THOUGHT

My one sweet thought! I hold it never
Far away from my embrace
And dwell upon it whensoever
Would I harsh pain efface.

It comes to me in dark despair,
When hard earned gains are quickly lost:
It comes when I may never dare
To count the strife and bitter cost.

O, sweetest thought! Usurper thou
Of soul's dependency above!
When thou dost come my head I bow
And realize the power of Love.

When days are cold and drear with care,
Sweetheart, thou comest close to me,
My one dear thought is doubly fair
While at Love's shrine I worship thee.

ONE HEART

The world has a billion people,
Aye the world has many more,
Like sands where the waves are beating,
Like sands on the long sea shore.

A friend we have in childhood, —
We meet and play and part,
Like chips on the waters drifting
With neither love nor heart.

The world is wide yet very small,—
The world is small, yet O how wide!
And while we taste the sweet and gall
We drift like chips upon the tide.

The world has a billion people
And hearts are fain to roam
'Till the thought comes o'er us, stealing,
There's never a place like home.

The world has a billion people!
The race will soon be run!
Of the hearts of the billion people
Love one, love only one!

MY DEAD LOVE

I watch the crescent moon
Climb up the arching sky.
The river bank is strewn
With reeds and grasses high.

I lie amongst the trees,
As climbs the crescent moon,
And there I feel the breeze
From off the fair lagoon.

And as she soars on golden wings,
A virgin not yet grown,
The insects hum, the river sings,
And I am not alone.

Ah, not alone!
For, at this mystic hour,
My lost one, hither flown,
Comes to our moonlit bower,

Where oft before, beneath the boughs,
I felt her beating heart,
She comes again to hear my vows—
She comes, but only part
Is here. The silvery beams
Of light shine through her form,
The eyes that once with gleams
Of love were full, now storm
My soul with sadness.
I clasp her in my arms
And yet she is not there.
My brain is near to madness,
I touch her flowing hair,

And with the old smile on her lips,
From out my arms she gently slips,
And when I hear the river's moan,
Upon the ground I lie alone.

THE BRIGHT SIDE

She swings with song and laughs with love,
This ancient world of ours—
She sorrows long and lifts above
Her eyes to hidden powers.

Then let the martyr bare his head,
The sanctified sing psalms —
I'll search amongst a flowery bed
And roses give for alms.

It may be true that Sorrow's hand
With weight on some is laid,
But why see gloom and running sand
Because a rose will fade?

Then let sweet youth be gaily gowned,
We'll dance and not alone—
We'll fill the air with laughter's sound
While roses red are strown.

O KISS ME

Give me one warm kiss!
I ask no more.
I know you love me not,
But give me this
And I will hold it, dear,—
A thousand years in store.

Force me not there
Alone, till you have kissed my longing lips
As you have done before,
When you and I, on Grecian Isles,
Once dwelt and youth was fair—
Kiss me again, ere life is o'er!

The sweetness of the kisses
I have dreamed
Of giving you!
The rapture of the torture
When it seemed
As if you knew!

Sweet is first love,
Sweeter than breath,
Too dear for life,
Sweet unto death—
Thus was it that I died
And you another's bride.

How many times around
Must turn the wheel
Of birth and death,
Till you will love?
Till you will feel
Your lover's breath—
His kisses?

O give me what I ask,
One wild, sweet kiss
To last a thousand years,
That I may bask
In this blest thought
Till you shall love!
O kiss me now!

QUIET DREAMS

And sometimes in my quiet dreams
The years roll back apace,
I see as oft I used to see
A fair, sweet, girlish face—

A face to me so dear in past,
Upon this lovelit day
I think to find again at last
And hold in sight alway.

THE PATHOS OF THE AGES

A particle of spirit pure
Dressed in garb of flesh and bone
Drawn to earth where sirens lure,
Battling blindly for its own,—
O, the pathos of the coming
O'er the road trod oft before!
O, the breasting of the breakers
Beating on life's rugged shore!

Pity shines in angel faces,
Guardian angels asking trust,
Tears have left their hallowed traces
In their faces and the dust.
Spirit struggling with brute forces
Striving bravely with fierce lust—
O, the pathos of the ages
Seen in wages ever just!

Silence sullen, forehead slanting,
Sensual longings, centuries through,—
Like a beast with passion panting
Strives the newborn for the dew

Glistening ever in its forming
On the spirit heights ahead,
On the battlements he's storming,
On the rocks where men have bled.

Striving ever, groping blindly,
Knowing not the life he wants,
Thinking that the dewy twinkling
Is a guide to sirens' haunts,—
Scoffed at, laughed at by his fair ones,
Fool and knave in him shall blend,
He it is that, full of folly, runs
For rainbow's golden end.

O, the pity of the struggling
Through the years, all blindly here!
Grasping at the straws he's passing,
Drawing nigh to death with fear,
Lifting loads through lengthy years,
Carrying cares with furrowed face,
Beaten back while blinding tears
Force him under in the race.

Death again comes all too quickly,—
How he clings to cruel life!
Lying there so wan and sickly,
Robbed his days of pleasures rife.
Death and birth play on forever
Back and forth with souls of men,
Straining each upon life's lever,
Bringing rest then strife again.

O, the pathos of the ages
Ushered in with blood or rhyme!
Swinging on while battle rages,
Smiling on through endless time.

Born again for sad undoing,
Learning lessons o'er and o'er,
From a different angle viewing,
Scaling heights oft scaled before.

Now he hears the songs of angels,
Sees the soul in other eyes,—
O, the pathos of his longing
As his spirit fain would rise!
Soaring up to realms of heaven,
Leaving dross and lust behind,
Cutting loose from earthly leaven,
Purified by spirit mind.

Life's ambition leaves him never,
Stands he now a man set free
Knowing things that bind and sever
In the troubled, human sea.
O, the pity of the knowing!
O, the bitter dregs of time!
When a soul with spirit glowing
Sells itself to sordid crime,

Leagues itself with develish doings,
Startles men with hidden power,
Sullies self with lustful wooings,
Sucks the sweetness of the hour.
O, the pathos of the falling!
O, the depths that souls can go!
O, the thoughts forever galling
And the hell of bitter woe!

Ages pass, pathetic ages,
Till that soul attains once more
To the vantage ground of victory,
To the peaceful, spirit shore.

Ages pass, pathetic ages,
While the balance weight is fair,—
Weary work but welcome wages—
Angels singing in the air.

Angels singing, guardian angels,
Guiding souls the long road o'er,
Smiling ever on the striving,
Guiding up from out the lower.
O, the pathos of the ages
Where God only knows the way!
O, the pity that the stages
Mark the paths where all souls stray!

Now he stand where eyes of mortal
May not see his guiding hand,
May not see the pearly portal
At the gates of spirit land.
He has won one fairest garland,
He has scaled one height aloft,
He is there in spirit starland
With the angels' music, soft.

Dare one say to all earth's people,
Dare one say to you, O friend,
That the Heaven's rest you long for
Is a struggle without end,—
That the City's gates all glowing
And the streets of jasper there
Are but milestones in the going
To another land more fair?

O, the pathos of the ages
Pictured out in lives of men!
O, the onward roll that sages
May not bound by "Now" or "Then"!

But the faith we learn from pity,
Pity crying in the land,
Bringeth souls to Heavenly City
In the hollow of God's hand.

SOUTH—NORTH

Languid lady of the South,
Psyche in a sensuous clime,
Sate with kiss of mouth,
Weary of love's trysting time,
Dreaming through the dolorous day
Of snowy lands far, far away—
Go thou to a Northern coast,
Thy dream shall surely be thy host.

THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM

Ten thousand years ago
There was a day of battle,
When women fought as men
With swords and spears,
That pierced like horns of cattle.
Strong, naked women rode
Astride fierce chargers—
Ten thousand years ago.

Long hair from riders streamed
And unclothed forms lay dead
Beside the way.
Fair breasts gave blood instead
Of milk, that day
And unveiled bosoms gleamed,
For woman first was in the fray.

The pendulum now far has swung
The other way, and great
The change in men!
While triflers think a steady course
Of time doth wait
On culture and the rule of pen,
That Love hath taken place of Force.

THE THREE DESIRES

A boy with golden locks and dreamy eyes
Filled full the daylight hours —
He went in chase of butterflies
And birds and rarest flowers.

His playmates offered him a share
Of berries picked and birds' nests robbed
But he returned with tangled hair
To mother's arms and sobbed, and sobbed.

And as the child dropped off to sleep
Upon his little trundle bed
He sobbed again in sorrow deep,
"I could not find my flower all red!"

A youth of beauty rare, with flashing eyes,
Always accompanied pleasure
And tried to go where Cupid flies
When lilting o'er his measure.

He played with Love and passed with Passion
Through groves in Grecian isles,—
He laughed with Love and silly Fashion
And then retraced the weary miles.

The mother arms were old and weak
But mother heart the same,—
The youth returned to comfort seek
And sobbing shook his frame.

And as he knelt at close of day
With buried face at mother's side
He sobbed again in childhood's way
"I could not find my dreamland bride!"

A man, in ways of men grown old,
With poet's brow and earnest eyes,
Who knew that flesh is only mold,
That spirit soars beyond the skies,

Sought day and night throughout the years
To solve life's riddle, dark,
Read ancient books, gave prayer and tears,
On spirit heights to set his mark.

But with his last and failing strength
He turned his footsteps brave
Toward mother's love, O weary length
Of road! he found her grave.

And as he knelt where flesh is robbed,
Where kneel old age and youth,
He whispered, as he sobbed and sobbed,
"I could not find God's hidden truth!"

THEN MINSTREL PUT THE VIOL DOWN

Last night we sang the old, sweet songs,
Familiar all and dear,
And with the words forgot our wrongs,
Forgot our pain and fear.

For eyes met eyes and voices played
On tender chords of love
While hearts beat gently and obeyed
The rhythm from above.

But when the bow stole o'er the strings
Of tragic violin
The frenzied fears that passion brings
Came weirdly stealing in.

O minstrel, play no more,—beware!
A wraith has seized the bow,
A human cry is in the air
And well the cry we know.

The rise and fall of that wild strain
Is soul of love's sad sobs,
That subtle note doth wake the pain
In human heart which throbs.

Then, minstrel, put the viol down—
Sing only songs we love,
The maidens' songs which bring no frown,
Like cooings of a dove.

WRAITHS

Sweet beings come to me with dawn's dear
 charms,
Fair pictures making,
And I would clasp them in my slumb'rous arms,
As I am waking.

They stay, nor will they go!
Like tale, just read,

They rend my heart, while well I know
Their forms are dead.

The loved ones lost in childhood's days
Return from out the grave!
My brother speaks, in boyish ways,
My mother's smiles I crave,

And not in vain. She comes, aglow
With loving eyes,
And then, with pain, I wake and know
That dreams are lies.

WOMAN'S LOVE

They stood by the gate of the old farm place
And the stars shone down on a vow
And he kissed her there on her upturned face
And he kissed her fair on her brow.

The stars shine down forever and aye—
They say they are steadfast and true,
But he bade her there a long good-by
As the stars shone down on the dew.

In the city's gleam and the city's glare
He found a life that was new
And gone was the face so young and fair
That he left with the stars and the dew.

But the cultured grace of a worldly face
He found in the banquet hall
And the gleam of an arm from out the lace
And the boson's rise and fall.

O, where is the man with love so fair?
O, where is the man so strong?
He kissed her face and he kissed her hair
And her love was his for a song;

Then a soul was sunk in deep disgrace,—
'Twas O, for the love of youth!
Twas O, for the gate of the old farm place
And the eyes so full of truth!

But the moving finger would not pause
Nor half a line erase
And the beauty fair beneath the gauze
Was gone with a clouded face.

They stood by the gate of the long, long way
And death held aloof for a space,
For she had come at the break of day
With the love in her poor, thin face.

Her hands were hard and her gown was old,
They told her that death was near,
But her heart was true and pure as gold
And her love knew never a fear,

So she pressed her lips to his cold, white brow
And his head she held on her breast
As she whispered over the old time vow
Neath the stars that sank in the west.

But death stands ready forever and eye
With his scythe and his winding sheet,
So she bade him there a long good-by
And kissed him fond and sweet.

THE ENVIED ROSE

She wears a rose just budding now,
O rose, that I were thou!
Red rose she wears in her wavy hair,
O rose, that I were there!
She wears a glow on her lovely brow,
A glow from a life of truth,
And O, that I might wanton tear
A kiss from lovely youth!

THE SORCERESS

She thunders forth the words of law!
In regal gown, bedecked with stones,
She dazzles untaught eyes.
With queenly grace she stands
Without a spot or flaw,
Her tragic voice the groans
Of men. Her every step defies:
Her eyes observe the outstretched hands.

Eternity! Eternity! thy angel fair is she!
With right arm raised and flashing eyes
She speaks for time long past;
With hand across her gleaming brow
Her piercing glance can see
What future has of truth and lies
What things shall die and what shall last
And men, agast, behold and bow.

BLOOD

Before the Gates of Pekin—July-August—1900.

The days of earth are full of grim portent!
The swaddling clothes of Peace
Were changed to whitest fleece,
A garment without rent.
And Peace herself stood out,
In that pure garb of white
And brooding wings of War and doubt
Withdrew in face of her fair might.

Then struck, with clanging sound,
The mailed hand of War,
And shrieking eagles swooped to ground
And scattered swift, and tore
The white-winged doves of Peace,
And smell of blood gave lease
To thrust of sword and cannon's roar.

The greed of men that made Rome fall,
The curse of gold, on high and low,
The grasp of might that crushes all
And gleans what others bled to sow,
Are things that Hell has lent.

The Lion, on the Afric plains,
Has strode where Freedom dwelled
And Britain has increased her gains,
While Liberty is felled.

America! the arms of millions,
Strike in wrath at Thee,
While Ignorance shows defiance,
Instead of bended knee.

America! the proudest name
That man has ever penned,
Upon Thy Banner never blame
Has found a place to sully Fame—
Stand clear while nations rend!

Blood drips from hoary locks of Strife,
Death stalks on land and sea,
Grim War has come again to life
And Peace is forced to flee.

Blood and Battle is the cry!
The Battle Kings are drawing nigh!
Might and Ignorance thrust and bound!
The Gods contend! and on the ground
Where millions swarm, the sound
Of blows, the death withstood
Give lie to human brotherhood!

TILL THEN AND YET UNTIL

You do not bid me wait—
Then wait I will.
You do not bid me love—
Then love I still,
Until the soul is dead
Till then and yet until.

COMMUNION

In a quiet, desert twilight
One lone star came faintly out —
Only I was there to see it
With the desert vast, about.

Then the desert sang her night song
As the sea sings far from land
And the wind blew over billows,
Ever white, of shifting sand.

And the spirit of the vastness,
Almost human, something more,
Spoke to me in gentle murmur
Like the waves along the shore.

Look above thee in the heavens!
Where that one star faintly shone
Many more shine round about it—
Nothing living lives alone.

When in Time's fair early morning,
Time that was not nor is yet,
Full of sweet and purest longing
Brahm a world did first beget,

Then it was that starry friendship
Came to life for evermore,
Brahm created for communion,
Dotted space with planets o'er.

THAT WHICH I SCORNE

Love came to a boy in a quiet place
And changed his life in a day,
Pride came to a girl with a lovely face
And she journeyed far away.

The boy and the girl were playmates long
In the village by the sea,
Love came to the boy and sang his song
And he dreamed of naught but me.

And he told me there of love's sweet dream
In the village by the sea,
But my heart was full of the glint and gleam
Of the life I'd planned for me.

Years went by—Fate brought me all
And more than I'd asked of life,
I tasted the sweet and not the gall—
Fate crowned me in the strife.

Men asked me for love and swore their faith,
Knights on bended knee,
But between us oft I saw the wraith
Of the love he sang to me.

O, dreaming boy that sang love's song
In the village by the sea,
Where is the heart grown brave and strong
That once you offered me?

WORSHIP—A WRAITH

Up from the strife of a callous world
Comes the shout of unbelief,
Out from the struggling mass of souls
The fret with the common lot.
As steals the baseborn thief,
The cry that God is not.

Hand in hand with the pride of living
Goes the blackened form of lust,
On with the stride of progress
The tiger to leap and tear.
And men go down in the dust
And cries go up in the air.

Woody by sons of men to-day
Is the ghost of a living faith
And wisdom's pearls from the beach of time
Are poorer than common stones.
And worship is but a wraith
Who rattles her shrunken bones.

THE MYSTIC SECRET

'Twas at a ball in winter time,
Old earth was white with snow
And youth and age and song and rhyme
Were there with music low.

And I, a youth with throbbing heart,
Had come at Love's behest
To feel again the pointed dart
Hid fair in maiden's breast.

And as I stood, all but concealed
'Neath palms from southern skies,
I caught that flash and 'twas revealed,
The secret, all, in woman's eyes.

FAME AND LOVE

Stretch high on marbled Fame
Thine arm and write aflame
In letters fair, thy name,
O friend!

Yet higher stretch thine hand
And write so fair that running sand
Of thine shall pause, while band
Of critics cold give meed

Of praise and peoples read
And hear of thee afar,
O friend!

And if, in mire
Bent low,
I higher
On Fame's marble help thee
Write again thy name,
Freely will I bend so—
To do it not would be my shame.

And when 'tis there aloft,
Thy name in letters soft
Of golden gleams all fair,
I'll climb as high
As thou my friend the stair
That all men try.

And by thy name aflame
With trembling hands
I'll write my fame
As thou didst write,
While pause the sands
In endless time
To wait on might,
On song and rhyme.

And when men see on marble shaft
Thy name and mine with equal craft
Carved there in scroll of Fame
I'll come and kiss thy angry brow
And tell thee that I love thee now,
And ever shall the same.

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

Two thousand years ago,
Before a slave of Caesar,
There stood a man
That was a King.
And the slave cleansed his hands,
White over a mantel
That hid a blackened heart,
And the King was taken to his death.

Gloom hung about Calvary.
On the faces of the rabble
There was gloom.
Gloom was on the earth,
Yet rejoiced were the stars
For the prestage was of peace.
The stone was rolled away,
The King came forth
And glorious was the resurrection.

PUNISHMENT

And whose'er with trifling hand
Shall strike Love's sacred Harp
And on its strings divine
Breathe one unhallowed breath,
The Gods shall make repine
And bring to direst death.

A NIGHT WITH FATE

Bedeviled by grin Satanic,
Hiding human heart beats,
Fate walked in early morning,
With me, through city streets.

Toilers and grinders were plodding
 Away to their daily strife,
With the sullen faces of oxen,
 To earn the bread of life.

Up through the smoke of a century
 A patch of blue I saw,
But the eyes of the slave looked downward,
 The winter wind was raw.

Fate grinned as he hailed a toiler,
 Swinging along the way,
"Ho Richard! How like you living?
 Was't better in ancient day?"

Instantly the man's form straightened,
 Eyes flashed with a kingly flame—
He stood there a ruler in triumph,
 The Richard of England's fame.

Fate beckoned me ever onward,
 We entered the factory door
And there in a hundred faces
 The ghastly tale read o'er.

Men sang, but there's singing and singing
 And the song that covers a woe
Were better shorn of beginning
 In the centuries long ago.

In the slums of the throbbing city
 We know men live and die:
Fate called, I hurried onward
 For I heard a woman's cry.

In clutch of the mob, an outcast
Whose hair was streaming wide —
Sobs shook her naked bosom,
But Fate walked by her side.

“Ho, ho, my royal lady!
How sets the beggar’s gown?
How like you this old earth again?
And where has gone thy crown?”

As clouds before a winter’s gale
Went cries to welcome death—
The beggar rose with royal mien,
She was Elizabeth.

Fate grinned no more, but in his face
Shone pity and sweet sorrow,
A tear for all the human race
Who live again to-morrow.

I hurried as he beckoned oft
And paused beside the tide:
He spoke and pointed to the sun—
“Life has a happier side.”

WHAT’S TO DO?

A lily white love is my lady fair
Yet am I not elate
And bonny and brown her waving hair
But cruel is my fate,
For I may never tell, all fond,
The threefold story, sweet—
My aching heart doth quite despond
And fall at Amor’s feet.

For I with lowly toil am worn,
Comes she of high estate
And Cupid's wings are sadly torn
Nor can he more shoot straight.

THE OCEAN BURIAL

Bury in cold and chilly earth
Unfeeling, chilly hearts—
To her embrace let them return
From out the crowded marts
Of cities, lost to joyous mirth.

But one, young, gentle and refined
Whose clay must lie rest,
For such fair temple let us find
A place 'neath ocean's breast
And bid her lie where waves are kind.

It is not well that fair and lovely forms
Should rest where worms may crawl,
'Neath damp and callous earth at last
The rounded limbs that did enthrall—
Dead shells on ocean's bed are safe from storms!

Then place her there and shed no tears,
Where wave the tinted arms of weeds
With rainbow hands and prismic eyes,
O leave her there at last! 'neath reeds
That rise and fall through days and years.

The glow of pearls close by her head,
The trailing weed a winding sheet,
Where colored fishes softly kiss
And tufty moss upholds her feet,
Where ocean flowers adorn the dead.

SWEETHEART

Sweetheart, I sail away to thee
Wherever the helmsman steers,
Whenever the main is wild and free
My hope doth banish tears.

Sweetheart, I strive alway for thee
Wherever my swift feet tread,
What task my eager eyes may see
'Tis done for hope ahead.

Sweetheart, of thee I dream alway
'Neath stars and summer skies
And by thy side I long to stay
And read thy shining eyes.

'Tis true I know thee not, Sweetheart
Nor are thy kisses real,
But still of me art thou a part,
My own, my fond ideal.

HUMAN WATERS

Thou breathing, pulsing, human stream
That flows through tortuous streets,
Winding, gliding, rushing on
To where a cross road meets
And ever on—fast—slow
And fast again,
With head erect and shoulders square,
With drooping mien and eyes that dare
Not look above—
Whose spray is cast aside,
Whose beggars cry aloud
And ask for alms,

Whose lame and halt can not abide
The crush—
The rush
Of human will—
The restless stride!
Thou human water
That dost cross a bridge
O'er other waters, flowing,
That take thy spray as theirs—
Thou heartless thing
That dost wind and glide
Past fanes and grave yards
But hast never time to pray,
Laughing,
Dancing,
Singing on
With ever ears for joy,
With never tears for groans!
Thou parricide,
Thou murderer—grim visaged ,
Thou!—whose hand doth brush
From youthful cheek its flush,
Whose iron doth burn
From youthful hearts
Their charm and grace,
Whose onward swirl doth people hell
And temper souls for paradise!
Thou, thou!—
I throw myself upon thy breast
And with thee hurry on!
Where to?
Speak, speak
And tell!
Or do but murmur in mine ear
If downward be the way.

THE HEART THAT THROBS INTENSE

The mind that grasps at grandest things,
(The heart that throbs, intense),
Doth soar aloft on spirit wings
In realms unknown to ignorance.

WOMAN'S EYES

In a second —
With the lift and turn of a lash,
My soul to hers was beckoned;
I saw the gleam and flash
Of eyes—her own—
O Life! it stirs
Eternity's dormant passion,
In Eternity's olden fashion.

I saw what gleamed!
It pierced my youth!
And now what seemed,
Is changed to truth.

What was it I beheld?
Listen, listen!
The flash of eyes!
Eternal law
Revealed. The rise,
The fall, the ebb, the flow,
The high, the low,
The summer skies,
The sunset glow,
And passion's sweets,
Her fond heart beats!

UNFATHOMABLE

You thought you knew what love was
A life time, most, ago—
You've loved and hated and suffered
But still you do not know.

You've scaled the highest mountain
And throbbed in the arms of art—
Measured the depths of ocean,
But never the human heart.

Gods may sense the eternal,
The angels may know its goal—
Each may fathom the other,
But never a woman's soul.

IMPATIENCE FOR FAME

O Time! wilt thou not hurry?
To-night I wait unhappy, in my room
As bride awaits the lagging groom.
And near are books and papers strewn,
Fame's favorites I behold, and soon
Fame's favor I would curry.

Ambition, rouse! rouse up and do—
Thou sweetest thing that God
Has stirred in cup of Life,
Warm breath of Being, Soul of strife,
Give me Fame's wings ere I to sod
Return, and Life is through.

The few that act upon Life's stage!
This man that writes a book!
That woman in whose fiery look

Is food for printed sheet,
Whose words of song are meet
To make men weep or rage!

I will! I will do things as great!
Nor shall I wait on laggard Time!
I'll write such words in frenzied rhyme
That men shall pause, and feel
Like soldiers thrust with pointed steel!
O hurry Time, come on like Fate!

"Hush, foolish one, hast thou not learned,"
Spake voice within my heart,
"That Time is not—that Art
Doth flee from all save giant hands
That build so strongly, that the sands
Of life are backward turned?"

"Do thou thy work, think not of balm
That soothes, if name of thine is sought;
Most things, at last, shall come to naught;
The song shall cease and book decay,
But thought shall live, if in it ray
Of Truth is seen, strong, pure, and calm."

Poems of California and the West

A SIGN

O YE THAT LOVE OUR WESTERN
SHORES,
MORE FAIR THAN ANCIENT GREECE,
HERE FOR THE WORLD ARE OPEN
DOORS
AND GOD HAS WET HIS FLEECE!

A CITY OF CALIFORNIA

O, city of a poet's dream!
By mountains girt about,
With valleys full of glossy gleam
Of orange trees, that often seem
To raise their arms with offerings
Of sweet and golden profferings,
Too fair for gods to doubt.

Grand mountains rise on either side,
Snow-capped in summer days
And far away to distant tide,
Throbbing, passionate, like virgin bride,
Billowy mists of green and blue
Rise and fall with every hue
That artist sees in blended rays.

And where on heights Diana drove
Now man hath wrought in nature's ways,
Fair gardens, fit for gods to rove,
Through airy aisles and lemon grove
To smell the balm like that which blows
From Thessaly.
Man here forgets his shadowy woes,
And dreams with Love of coming days.

And looking off where vision ends,
On rolling depths the eye alights,
While azure blue of heaven bends,
Down, down, and then with ocean blends,
Until the sight of man is dim,
And mystic thoughts steal over him
And raise him up to awful heights.

O, city of a favored land!
O, virgin ne'er to mate!
Thy mountains 'round thee grimly stand,
Thy fairness is on every hand,
While Star of Empire, Westward bent,
Unto thy name acclaim has lent,
Thy future shall be great.

THE SPIRIT OF LOS ANGELES.

Ethereal dweller, neath southern skies,
With shining, yellow hair
Where gloom awing with wishing flies
And life is fond and fair,

What gardens of the gods aglow
Were tended with thy care
Before this summer land could know
Thy spirit in the air?

Thou siren near the silvery shore
Of verdant flowery lands
The gods bend down to love thee more—
To kiss thy dimpled hands!

On rugged Sierra Madra's crest
The tall dark pines are sighing
That they might clasp thy virgin breast
Where moonbeams find thee lying.

And on the hardened ocean beach
The waves are laughing, foaming—
Then ever strive to nearer reach
Were thou art, ever roaming.

The orange trees stretch out their arms
With golden profferings laden
And nodding flowers bend low their charms
To worship such a maiden.

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

Thou art come,
Chieftain of the Nation!

In ancient Greece
There woke a singer once
And in the centuries
That have flown
She has been called
By men
The Poet.
Naught may be used
To greater make
That which greatest is,—
Fate ne'er surer flew
Because the lesser powers
Hung trappings on his wings,—
And so we hail thee Chief
And call the country that thou rulest
The Nation of the earth.
Here where Junipero came,
Where Spain's bold flag
Dripped blood upon the land,
Where Fremont stood
The outpost of the New
And glittering gold
Was wooed by all the world,
In triumph thou art come,
Through groves of green

And vales of nodding flowers,—
And in the Western heart
Enough there is still left
Of ancient loyalty
Unto a kingly cause
To hail thee King of Nations,
Yet know thee—citizen
And president.

And thus it is
We give thee welcome.

Written at the time of President McKinley's
visit to Los Angeles and the Pacific Coast in
May—1901.

JUNIPERO SERRA

Fair the breezes fanned Majorca
On a day in early spring
And through the streets of ancient Petra
Hurried friends to tidings bring.
To a Spaniard laboring slowly,
Waiting for the sunset gun,
Came these eager friends and lowly
Bringing tidings of a son.

Junipero Serra—man of iron in days of olden!
In glittering empyrean should thy deeds be
sung—
Hadst thou lived to circumstance more beholden
Time's hand would hardly turn so far but tongue
Of man should render praise to thee,
But hearts of men with inspiration swell
At thought of those that, reverent, bowed the
knee
To work of thine, done all so well.

Where daring deeds there were to do
And paths in virgin forests 'bout
For iron men like you
To hew and straighten out,
Thou camest and oft didst dream
That God and empire sent thee here,
The unfurled flag of Spain and gleam
Of Christly cross the souls of men to cheer.

O day of July first
In year long gone!
Thou wert of Alta California
The Natal Day
And the greatness
That thou didst usher in
Was more, and closer
To the stride of Fate
Than ever day before
Didst dawn upon,
In the annals of
That County fair
To which, with unknown guidance,
Thou didst yield
The twilight
Of thy coming.

THE EIGHTH WONDER

Where California's mountains rise
With snowy peaks to summer skies,
Where savage tribes in early day
Gave up a land to Christian sway
And flag of Spain on bloody sod
Was raised aloft in name of God,

There in the South where skillful hand
Hath made a garden of the land,
Where brain and brawn and buried gold
Have brought the new from out the old,
Where far away o'er mountains' crest
The Star of Empire seeks the West,

There chiseled in rude cañon bed
The centuries show the Arrow Head.
While Pyramids of Egypt stand
And men can trace on Eastern sand
The Walls of Babylon—in dreams
Behold her Hanging Gardens, and the gleams
Of golden light that flicker rare
From Temple of Diana fair,
And once again in worship stand
By Jovian Statue on Olympian strand—
While we Colossus view at Rhodes,
And Mausoleum death forbodes,

E'en yet on rugged mountain side
The Arrow Head doth still abide
And so it shall while Time doth run
And earth doth smile at shining sun—
To tell the world of peoples, dead,
That lived and loved by Arrow Head.

ON RAYMOND HILL

Out through the vista of the hills
He gazes and listens and dreams.
Birds are singing, butterflies winging,
Life his pulses thrills
And close to her he's clinging.

Distant the sound of a bell,
Distant the city's strife.
About him the murmur of summer
And sweet the wildflowers' smell
And quickened the throb of life.

Barefooted, a boy came singing,
Swinging his chubby fists,
Glad and joyous came singing
But with him sadness was bringing
In memory of bygone trysts.

O the love of a blue-eyed maiden!
O the thought of other years
When life was lived in Aidenn,
Long ago with the love of a maiden—
O cease ye blinding tears!

A DREAM PROPHECY

A summer sun shone on an orchard fair,
That stretched about a southern home,
A California home of dreams,
And one sat there beneath the trees
And gazed into the blue, ethereal dome
Of heaven the while the gleams
From glossy leaves and hum of bees
Enthralled, for peace was in the air.

He was a youth with bronzed and earnest face
Who sat beneath those cooling bows
And glanced, betimes, upon his grandsire, old,
Whose palsied frame at Gettysburg had fought;
But now he listened to the oft-told vows
Of love, a girlish voice did sweetly mold

To purest song, with passion frought,
And give to earth with gentle grace.

Then one stood forth, all bright with other life,
And hum of bees and girlish song were not
And he that saw was dead to earth, mayhap,
And knew but her whose name was Peace.

"Take, take the gifts the gods to you have
brought"

She said. "Enjoy, for time will come when lap
Of mine shall overflow and lease
Of love shall change to cruel strife.

"As truck thy grandsire's arm in battle's shock,
As groaned that land and reddened o'er with
blood,

As died her sons and wailed her widows then,
As cringed her Freedom in the gates of Fear,
So this land shall groan beneath the flood
That whelms her children, till that hour when
They shall rise and rescue Freedom, near
Run to earth, while rich men mock."

CATALINA

Catalina, Siren maiden!
Lying clothed in satin blue,
In waters warm as those of Aidenn—
The summer skies bend over you.

Lap the waves against thee ever,
Kiss the winds thy naked limbs,
Tires Nesaeë never, never—
White her foam the sea beach dims.

Catalina, eastward glancing
At thy lover's lofty head,
With the moonlight on thee dancing,
Far Sierra sees thy bed.

Sly Aeolus hovers over
Pressing kisses on thy mouth,
Fair to him—the fickle rover—
Are thine odors from the south.

Mystic Isle, in bed of ocean,
Thou hast bared thyself to love,
Warmed art thou with Amor's potion
And thine arms are stretched above.

Hearts for thy embrace are beating,
Never Lesbos better knew
That the Muses' favor, fleeting,
Is for those that sail to you.

THE BANYAN TREE AT AVALON, CATALINA ISLAND

Came you there by bird or billow,
Washed by wave or carried far
With some flight of sea birds, winging
Underneath the tropic star,
There to grow with gum and willow?

Banyan tree, we bless thy waking
On the isle where Avalon
Nestles in the sea-girt canyon,
Dreaming of the days long gone,
Listening to the billows breaking.

Came you from the Eastern Indies?
Of thy coming we will boast!
Came you from the fair Hawaii
Or from Persia's balmy coast,
Sacred fig tree o'er the seas?

Whence or whither was thy coming
Matters not, O Banyan tree,
Thou art sign of tropic gloaming,
Thou art rife of things to be
In this land, the end of roaming,
Where thou camest, o'er the sea,
Lone and lonely Banyan tree.

A HISTORY OF ARIZONA

Brown and bare the desert,
Under a sun-cursed sky—
Far the stretch of the sand hills,
To the mountains, looming high—
Drear and dun the village,
Where somebody came to die.

Over the waste of the desert,
Gleamed the steely track,
Over the heart of somebody
The longing to go back—
Oh, that the light for somebody
Could shine through the coming black!

Gay and bright the laughter,
Under the ball-room light—
Low and sweet the music
Far into fleeting night—
Fair and queenly a woman,
Wielding her royal might.

She was the thought of somebody,
Coughing his life away,
Silently, hopelessly loving,
Loving and blessing always—
Constant the thought of somebody,
Loving, night and day.

Grim at the stake the martyrs
Lifted their eyes and prayed!
First in the fray the soldier,
Firm and unafraid!
But out on the dreary desert
Somebody's grave was made!

THE SONG OF THE SIREN OF RIO COL- ORADO

Love to your death ye dark skinned race,
The foe of the North, the Pale Face!
Sigh to the hills, burnt and old—
He cometh, he loveth the yellow gold.
I lie in the bend of the dark brown stream—
With the mountains of eld I watch and dream
And yon where trees the gorges span
Winds oft the White Man's caravan.
Far in the East the Red Man died—
There, soundeth now the conqueror's stride
And the Indian's fate with change is fraught
For bold and brave is the argonaut.
I dream at night in the full moon's gleam
As, silent, I swim the sullen stream:
Since the birth of the hills I've held my sway—
Peoples have lived and passed away!
What to me is the Indian's death?
'Tis the waning stir of a desert breath,
But fairer than all the gold in the West

Is my mystic spell in a maiden's breast;
Yet the passing Red Man's hand will kill
On the barren plain and rugged hill.
And I must save out of blood and fire
A fair faced boy from savage ire—
I'll wrap him now with power about
While his friends go down in treacherous rout.
Fierce and wild are those fiends of hell—
Know the seekers of gold the story well!

On desert plains where the hot sun pours
And the River flows to ocean shores—
Melted snows from mountain rills
Thick with red of basalt hills—
Here in the South—the Indian's land—
Shall Fate make strong the White Man's hand.
The Siren knows the sullen way
Of the sinuous stream by night and day—
She laughs at the future and mocks the past
For naught is changeless—naught shall last,
But the wakening dream and mystic spell
In a maiden's breast are hidden well —
She will hold him close with her warm, dark
arms
And he shall love her savage charms.
Yet Juta's song will grow faint and still
For The God Of The Air hath power to kill
And Basla's cry shall tell the grief
Of a broken tribe and a powerless chief.

In the yellow swirl of the yellow stream
I swim with the flood in a half day dream—
I pick the gold from my thick, damp hair
And the mountain spirits calls me fair
And ever when the bank doth fall

A rapturous lover hears my call,
While every stark and stranded tree
Holds drowning fauns who cry to me;
But I laugh aloud and shake my hair—
For a siren's love the brave shall dare!
Oh, strange the things my spell will do
And the work of my hands is never through—
See yonder camp of Pale Face braves!
They too are Moera's willing slaves
And the youth with the babe of straight, dark
hair
Is the maiden's love—The God Of The Air.
And now they go with pick and pan
To the Western shore with the caravan
And the gold they find with shining face
Shall change the hue of the dark skinned race,
For war and love and glistening gold
Are siren's tools since days of old.

DREAMS

All his life he gravely wondered
If the hour would ever come
When his many ties were sundered
And his crying cares were dumb.

And crusader he or Galahad
Forth to fare like storied knight,
On where Christ or maiden beckoned
To the thickest of the fight.

Oft he saw his sweet dream princess
Welcome him as he returned,
Felt her loving arms around him,
Heart to his that fondly yearned,

Then he'd wake from dearest dreaming
To the struggle of the years,
Face again the toil and heartache,
Choking back unmanly tears;

But the dreams, the dreams, the day dreams
Close enshrined within his breast,
They were his to dream and redream—
God or fate might take the rest.

SOME DAY

I do not know what life means,
I cannot fathom it;
But the soul that's full of longing
For something that is fit,
For something right and God-made,
Must some day compass it.

WILL SHE TOO COME?

I did not know that such a thing could be,
That nature-love and art, camaraderie
And lust of hill and wind and bounding sea
Could come back to my heart that sent
them forth
And ask "Where is the love thou gavest me?"

Alas my trembling lips could only say
"That love for thee lives on," and "nay" and
"nay,"

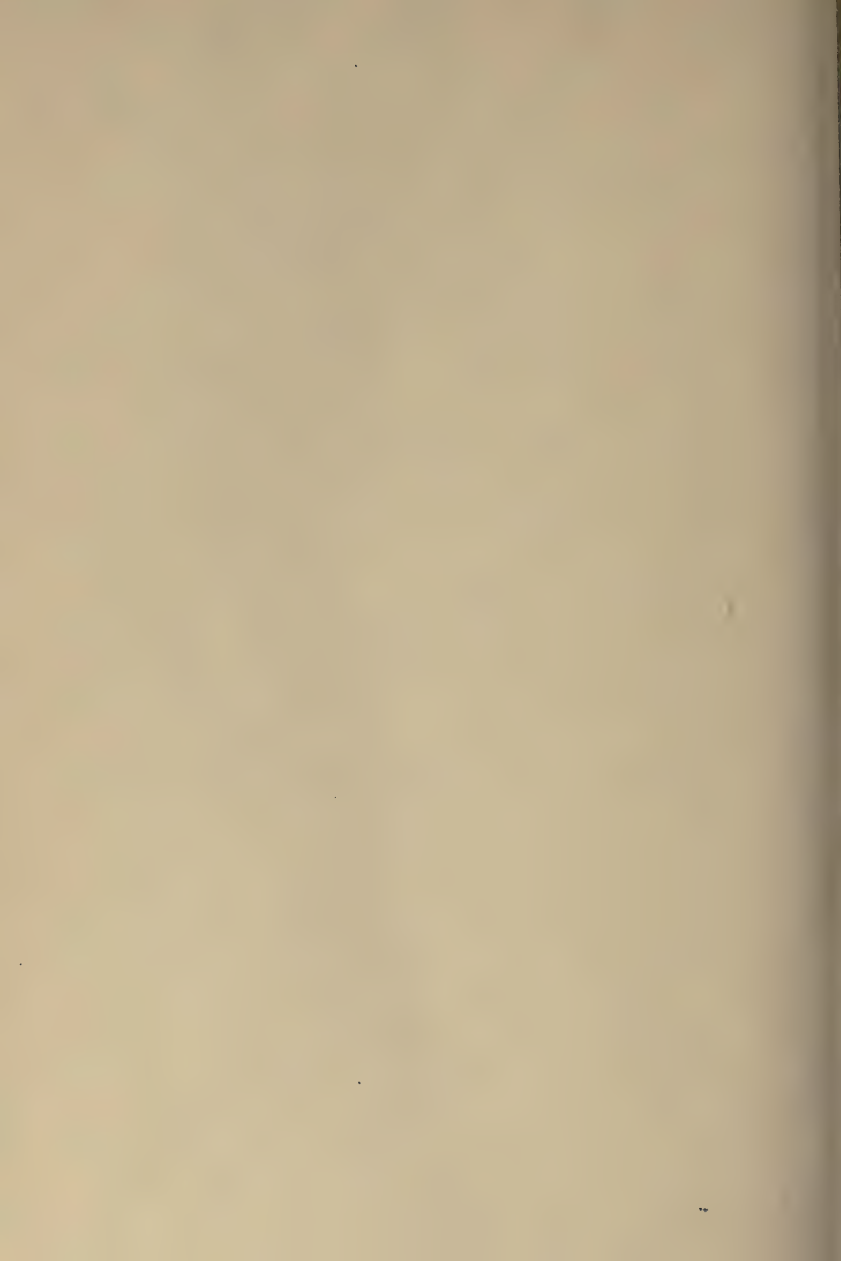
It is not true that love is turned away,
'Tis only hid by eyes and hair and mouth
Of one dear girl I met no distant day.

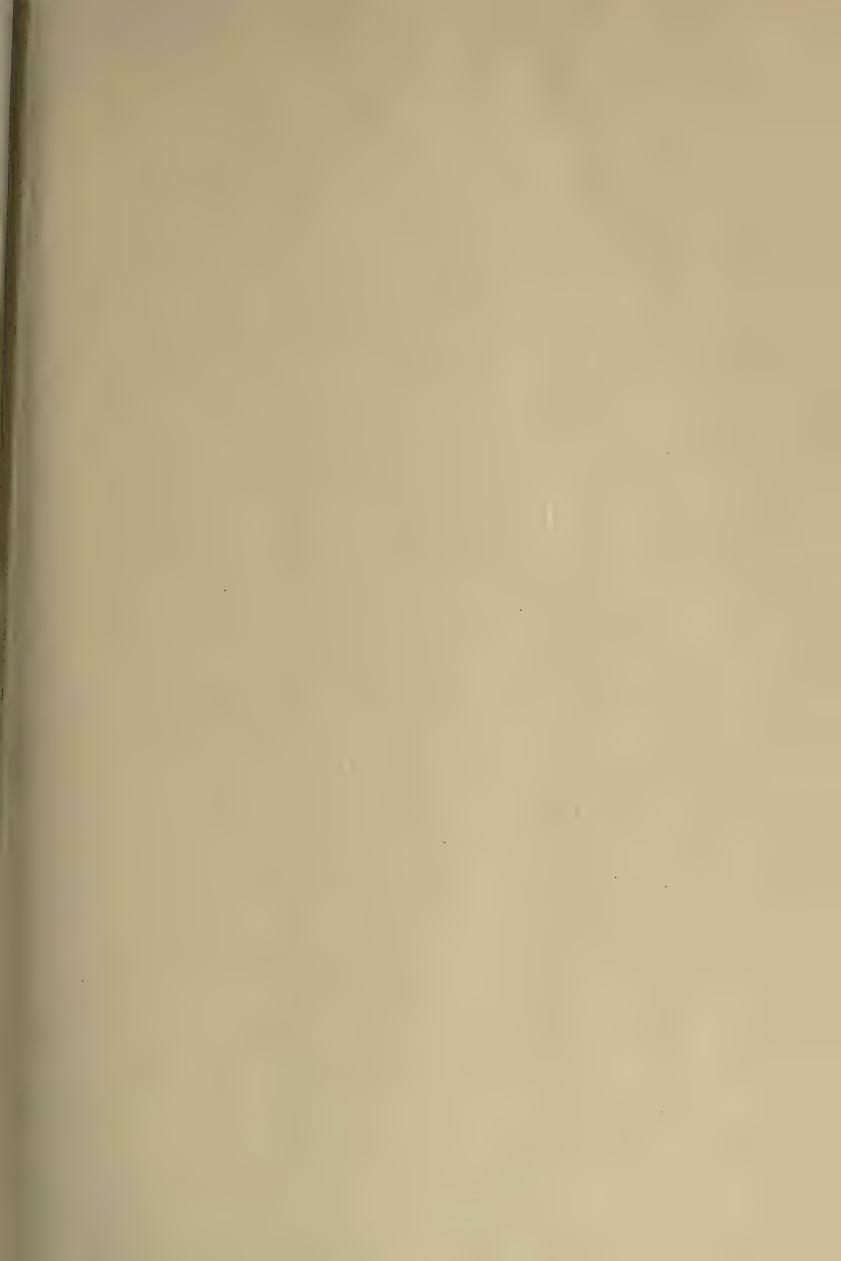
"Wait wind, and bounding sea and hill
Until this famished heart of mine hath had its
fill;
Some day its wildest throbs will grow more
still

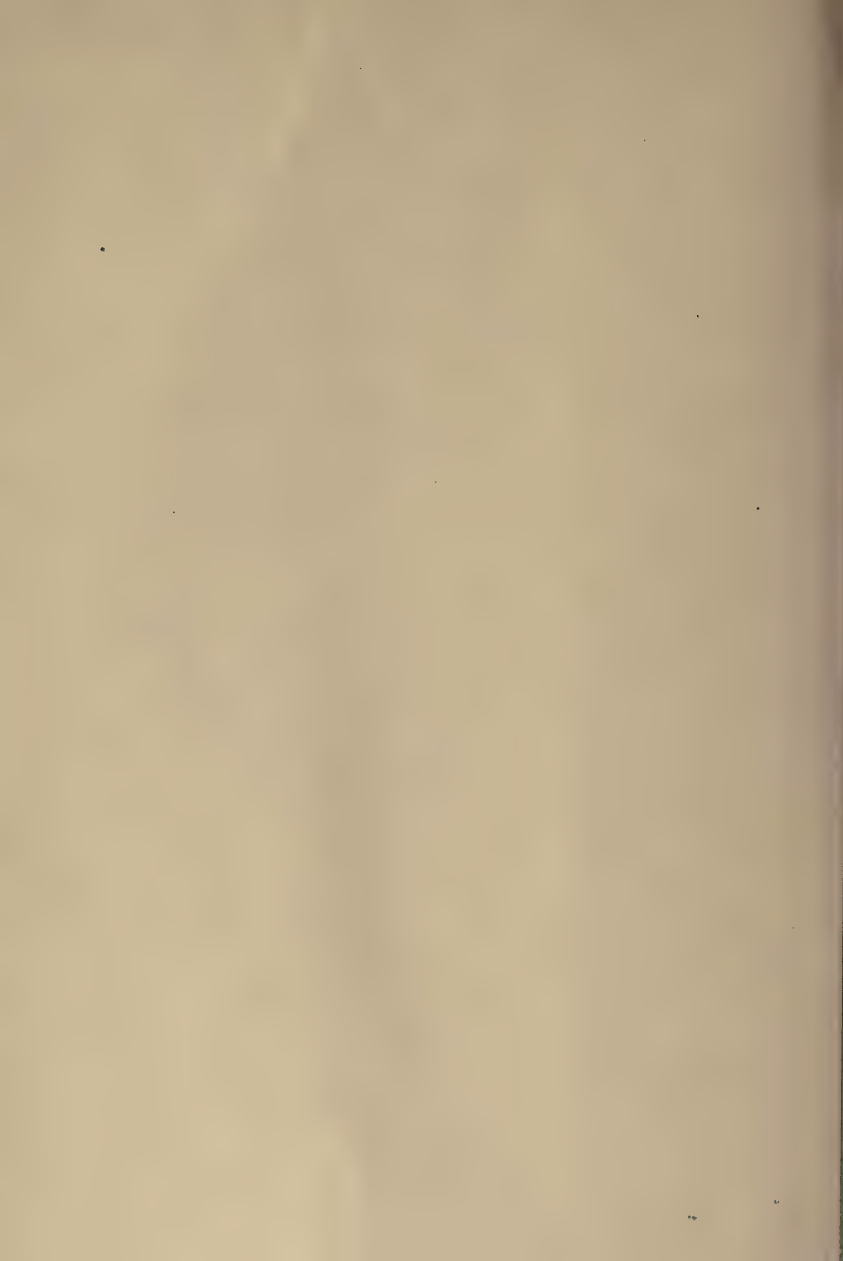
And then I'll come to thee—and she,
Ah yes, the girl—she will—she will."

TO A BELOVED SOUTHERN LADY

Thou dark-red Tiger Lily of the South,
Queenly in grace,
Glorious, whose face
And eyes and mouth
And halo of dark hair
All make me stare,
Hypnotic, dumb,
Into the years to come.







POPPY GOLD

I was grubstaked by a woman in the roaring
month of March,

And I mined along the hills of San Joaquin--

There was water in the canyons and my
tongue it did not parch,

And I cradled yellow gravel through a screen.

Love was loaded on my bronco by the side of
meat and flower,

And with joy my heart was throbbing in my
side;

But the nuggets that I sought for, for my
sweetheart and her dower,

Were illusive like the mustang when he shied.

Then I lifted up my eyes from the trail that,
winding, led

To the mesa and, O miracle behold!

My lady of the grubstake lay an heiress in
her bed

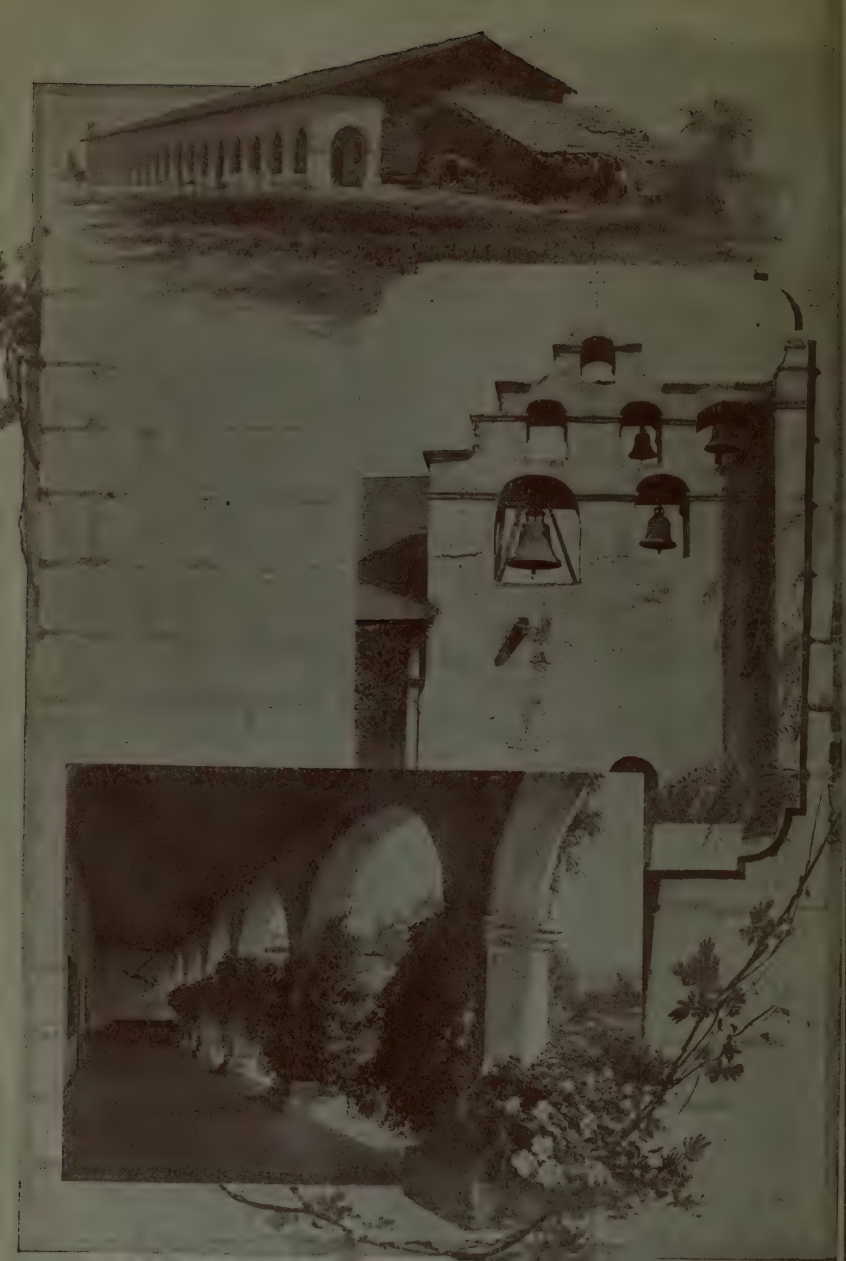
For the mesa, it was studded red with gold.

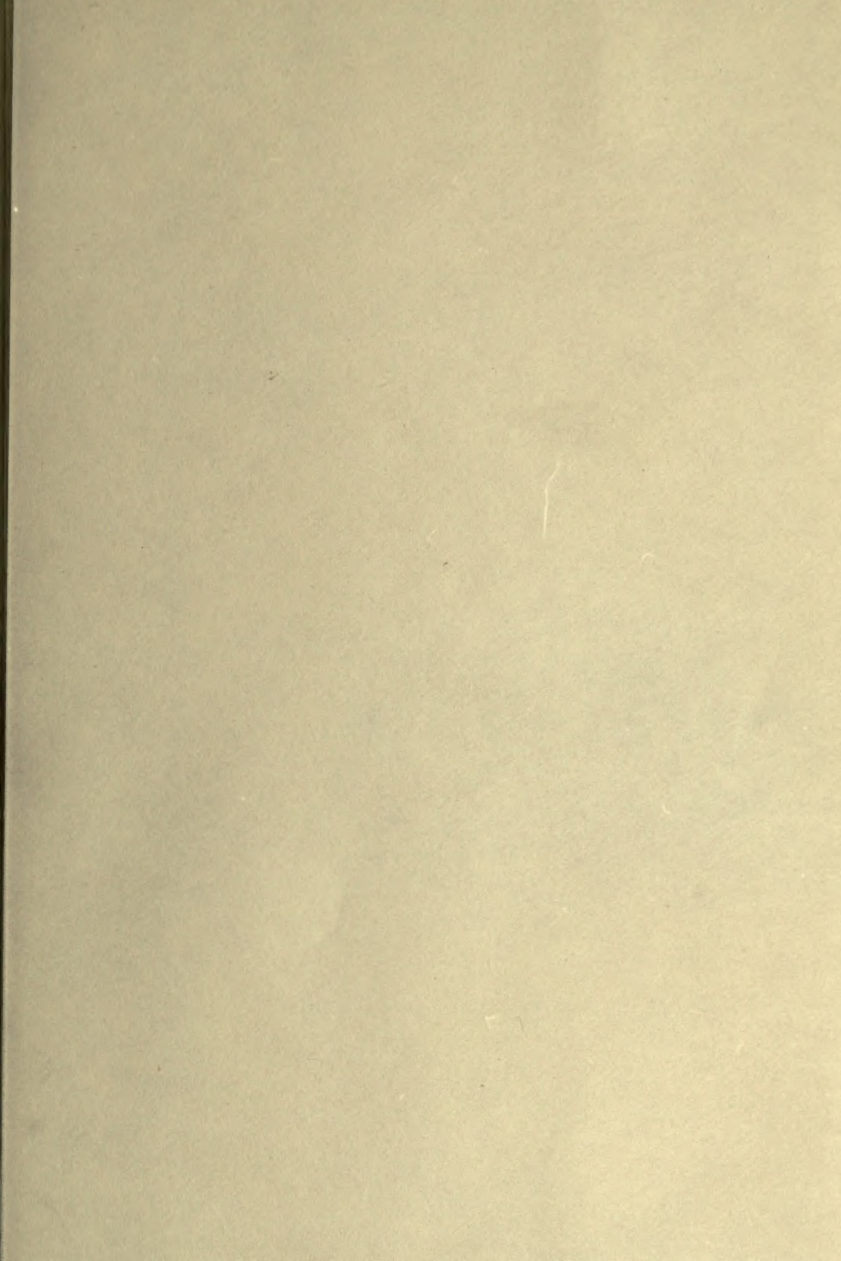
O the poppies, golden nuggets, golden poppies
like the larch!

I was loaded with the nuggets ere I tried

And the woman who had staked me in the
roaring month of March,

Would be poppy crowned an heiress and a
bride.





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Field, Benjamin Franklin
Poems

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